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Registration for National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference Now Open

25th Anniversary Conference to Commemorate a Legacy of Achievements

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) announced that registration is open for the 2007 Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference at www.medweek.gov. The MED Week conference will take place September 13-14 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC.

The theme for the conference is *Celebrating the Legacy of Innovation and Competitiveness*, and will feature the renowned author and innovation expert Dr. Vijay Govindarajan as keynote speaker. Mr. Steve Forbes, CEO and President of Forbes Magazine, is also participating as chair of the Honorary Committee. The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth will release a report focused on minority entrepreneurs that have gained a competitive edge by successfully implementing innovation. In addition, the 25th Anniversary Awards gala will recognize individuals who have played an integral role in the progress of minority business development over the course of their lifetime.

The 2007 MED Week Conference represents a milestone of achievement for minority business development. This year marks the 25th anniversary of MED Week and minority business enterprises have experienced phenomenal growth during the past three decades. At last count, there were over 4.1 million minority-owned firms in the United States whereby these firms generated close to \$700 billion in gross receipts and employed more than 4.7 million workers.

“Overseeing this momentous occasion in MBDA’s history gives me great pleasure,” stated MBDA National Director Ronald N. Langston. “There is no doubt progress has been made in fostering the growth and prosperity of minority business enterprises. MED Week allows us to celebrate these achievements and it serves as an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the American ideal of economic independence through business ownership.”

Joining Steve Forbes on the 25th Anniversary Honorary Committee are Robert Unanue of Goya Foods, Inc; Senator John Kerry; Congresswoman Carolyn Kilpatrick; Congressman Steve Chabot; Congressman Dale Kildee; Congressman Joe Baca; Congressman Michael Honda; and a host of other business, media and political leaders.

The MED Week 2007 Public-Private Sector Planning Committee is led by Mr. Howard Li, CEO of Waitex International, New York, NY, and co-chaired by Mr. Massey Villareal, President of Precision Task Group, Houston, Texas, and Ms. Brenda L. Schneider, First Vice President of Comerica Bank, Detroit, Michigan. Returning as Chair Emeritus is Ms. Benita Fortner, Supplier Diversity Director for Raytheon Company, Long Beach, California.

MED Week has grown tremendously since its modest beginnings in 1983, when only a hundred people were in attendance. Today, with the combined leadership of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and other public and private sector partners, MBDA has elevated MED Week to a distinguished and intellectually stimulating event attracting over 1,000 attendees. Premiere sponsors making the 25th Anniversary possible include Raytheon Company, VISA and GVCwinstar and Northrop Grumman Corporation. Other notable sponsors include SAIC, Chevron, IBM and Lockheed Martin.

The first MED Week was declared by President Ronald Reagan in 1983; and, each President thereafter has issued a proclamation praising the achievements and contributions of minority entrepreneurs and business owners. MED Week calls on the Nation to commemorate the minority business enterprise community whose growth continues to outpace the growth of all U.S. firms. These conferences provide business owners with an opportunity to learn from and network with those that MBDA National Director Ronald Langston calls the “best in class” speakers. Leading up to the National MED Week conference are regional MED Week events in New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas and San Francisco.

From its inception, MED Week has proved an invaluable experience for participants and MED Week 2007 will uphold this tradition by bringing in the most influential and respected people from government agencies, corporations, and business associations. Attendees will participate in thought-provoking plenary sessions where they will learn about innovative business tools and strategies to maintain a competitive edge. Those who are interested in attending this year’s landmark event can learn more by calling 1-888-836-7647 or visiting www.medweek.gov.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce

Established in 1969 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the strategic growth and expansion of minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of more than forty local business centers throughout the United States. More information and helpful resources to build minority businesses are available at www.mbda.gov.